

## REMARKS

### STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 have been amended.

No new matter is being presented, and approval of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

### REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

On page 3 of the final Action, the Examiner rejected claim 1, stating the limitation “the part” lacks sufficient antecedent basis.

The independent claims were amended in the Amendment After Final Rejection, filed June 26, 2006, to maintain proper antecedent basis. These claim amendments have been entered, according to the Advisory Action. Approval of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

### REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

On pages 3-11 of the final Action, the Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over previously-cited Okada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,393,461) (hereinafter “Okada”) in view of Bunney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,446,112) (hereinafter “Bunney”).

On page 4 of the Action, referring to claim 1, the Examiner states that Okada does not disclose “a table for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said virtual communications spaces” and, thus, Bunney is cited as disclosing this feature.

Further, the Advisory Action Continuation Sheet newly relies on Bunney col. 11, lines 1-43 and column 12, lines 8-21, which discusses (col. 11, lines 37-40) “The nickname is a combination of a host code unique within the network and the sequence ID specific to host and guaranteed to be unique on the host.”

Amended independent claim 1, for example, recites means for associating a designated identifier of a person with a virtual communication space identifier to determine character-train information usable as a message sender identifier for the person in the virtual communication space; and a table storing therein, in association with each other, the identifier of the person using said virtual communication spaces, the identifier of said virtual communication space and the corresponding character-train information of the person.

For example, the present Application, at page 4, lines 8-17, supports the claim amendments.

Bunney's discussion of a unique host code and sequence ID specific to a host differs from the claimed present invention's "a virtual communication space identifier". In other words, a host ID, as discussed in Bunney, is not equivalent to a virtual communication space identifier, as recited in amended independent claim 1.

That is, Bunney merely teaches a table (Table 6) storing identifiers of users for sending a notification to an e-mail address of the user to notify the arrival of a new e-mail at another corresponding e-mail address, which the user did not use to log on, but also belongs to the user. (See column 9, lines 12-20 and column 10, lines 1-12). Even if, *arguendo*, the e-mail addresses of Bunney are considered to be defined as virtual communication spaces for a chat system, as described in the present application, Table 6 merely allows a message in a virtual communication space of a user to be sent to notify the user of the arrival of a new chat message in another communication space.

In contrast, present invention, as recited in amended independent claim 1, discloses associating a designated identifier of a person with a virtual communication space identifier to determine character-train information usable as a message sender identifier for the person in the virtual communication space, and a table storing therein, in association with each other, the identifier of the person using said virtual communication spaces, the identifier of said virtual communication space and the corresponding character-train information of the person.

Further, in the Advisory Action, the Examiner notes that Bunney teaches messaging between individuals or groups using one-to-one and many-to-many chat groups and the opportunity to use a plurality of identities per person along with associated preferences and interests for each identity (citing column 2, line 66, to column 3, line 16). However, there is no discussion in the cited references of associating a designated identifier of a person with a virtual communication space identifier to determine character-train information usable as a message sender identifier for the person in the virtual communication space, as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

The other independent claims recited similar features to independent claim 1, described above, and thus it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1, 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

The pending dependent claims inherit the patentability of their respective base claims and, thus, it is further submitted that the dependent claims patentably distinguish over the prior art.

## CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. Further, all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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